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Israel: Israel's representative to the peace talks probably will not return to New York before the end of this week at the earliest.

In its regular meeting on 30 August the cabinet did not complete its discussion of tactics for Ambassador Tekoah's talks with UN mediator Jarring. Tekoah's return will therefore be delayed, according to reports in the Israeli press, until after cabinet meetings scheduled for yesterday and possibly Thursday.

Meanwhile, the press has been making much of the continuing cabinet discussion of Israel's position on the talks. Defense Minister Moshe Dayan has been cited as insisting on the correction of Egyptian cease-fire violations before the talks could continue. Other members of the cabinet are reported by the press to be opposed to making an issue of the cease-fire violations at this time and to be in favor of continuing the talks. Prime Minister Golda Meir, however, is known to have grave personal reservations about the cease-fire violations and may herself be close to Dayan's position.

At any rate, the increased cabinet concern over the violations has probably contributed at least in part to a hardening of Israel's position toward the talks. Press reports from Tel Aviv have indicated that Israel will insist that Egypt remove from the cease-fire zone missiles that the Israelis say were moved into the zone since the cease-fire went into effect.

As yet, however, no responsible Israeli official has tied Tekoah's return to a roll-back of the Egyptian missile installations.

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NOTES

Cambodia: Communist forces yesterday checked a second effort by government troops to retake the town of Srang, 25 miles southwest of Phnom Penh. Cambodian casualties reportedly were light, however. The US defense attaché in Phnom Penh speculates that an enemy battalion from the headquarters of the North Vietnamese 1st Division, located some ten miles west of Srang, may be participating in the battle. [redacted]

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Laos: The Communists appear to be making an eleventh-hour effort to get Prime Minister Souvanna Phouma to agree to their scenario for peace talks. In a radio broadcast on 1 September, Pathet Lao leader Prince Souphanouvong named a new representative who would be prepared to meet at Khang Khay with Souvanna's plenipotentiary to "create conditions" for later negotiations. Souphanouvong condemned his half brother's appointment of a "so-called government delegation" for the talks as contrary to an alleged understanding that the meetings at Khang Khay would be between representatives of the two princes. Souvanna, who is scheduled to leave Laos today on a two-month trip abroad, is unlikely to accede to the latest Pathet Lao demands, although it is possible that he may delay his departure until he meets with Souphanouvong's emissary in Vientiane. [redacted]

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Libya: On the first anniversary of the Libyan coup, Premier Qaddafi limited his speech to a rhetorical diatribe on the necessity for Arab unity. He laid great stress upon the upgrading of the Libyan Army in the year since the revolution and noted the presence of modern tanks and aircraft in the parade. Qaddafi, however, reserved the details of Libya's "great achievements"--which presumably will include some reference to actions taken or contemplated against the oil companies--for another speech to be given in Benghazi on 4 September. [redacted]

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International Copper: The International Council of Copper Exporting Countries will meet in Paris on 15 September to discuss means of stemming the decline in the world market price for copper, which dropped from 80 cents per pound last April to a current level of 56 cents. Council members are Zambia, Chile, Peru, and Congo (Kinshasa), all heavily dependent on copper sales for foreign exchange earnings and government revenues. They are the major free world copper producers besides the US and together account for more than three fourths of world copper exports.

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